

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
89R8022 BEE-D

S.B. 1215
By: Kolkhorst
Water, Agriculture and Rural Affairs
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As Filed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

In 2019, H.B. 1300 (86th Legislature, Regular Session) was enacted, establishing the oyster mariculture industry in Texas. This law allowed for the cultivation of oysters in controlled environments but also explicitly prohibited the introduction of cultivated oysters into natural oyster beds. This was done to safeguard the integrity of natural oyster populations, prevent the spread of diseases, and protect the ecological balance of these important marine environments. However, the law did not provide a clear process for placing cultivated oysters in private oyster beds or coastal waters, which could be part of the ongoing growth of the oyster mariculture industry in the state.

S.B. 1215, as currently filed, amends Section 2 of Chapter 75 of the Parks and Wildlife Code with the addition of Section 75.01045. The amending language allows for the placement of cultivated (farmed) oysters on natural or private oyster beds and within coastal waters with written authorization from the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD). The bill adds that TPWD should use best management practices to authorize the placement of cultivated oysters.

As proposed, S.B. 1215 amends current law relating to the placement of a cultivated oyster in a natural oyster bed, a private oyster bed, or coastal waters.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

This bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, institution, or agency.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Chapter 75, Parks and Wildlife Code, by adding Section 75.01045, as follows:

Sec. 75.01045. PLACEMENT OF CULTIVATED OYSTERS IN CERTAIN LOCATIONS WITH DEPARTMENT APPROVAL. (a) Authorizes a person to place a cultivated oyster in a natural oyster bed, a private oyster bed, or coastal waters if the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) authorizes the placement in writing.

(b) Requires TPWD to adopt best management practices for authorizing the placement of cultivated oysters under this section.

SECTION 2. Amends Section 75.0106(b), Parks and Wildlife Code, to prohibit a person from placing a cultivated oyster in a natural oyster bed, a private oyster bed, or coastal waters, except as authorized by Section 75.01045, and to make nonsubstantive changes.

SECTION 3. Effective date: September 1, 2025.